

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-48. (Cancelled)

49. (Currently Amended) A composition for strengthening bone in a mammal comprising degraded collagen, ~~ealcium~~, and vitamin D₃, and a calcium agent suitable for absorption by a mammal, wherein said composition is suitable for oral administration in an amount effective to induce a bone strengthening effect in ~~[[a]]~~ said mammal.

50. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 49, wherein the composition comprises enzymatically-degraded collagen.

51. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim ~~[[50]]~~ 49, wherein the composition comprises collagen degraded by limited acid proteolysis.

52. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim ~~[[50]]~~ 49, wherein the composition comprises collagen degraded by limited alkaline proteolysis.

53. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 49, wherein ~~thethe~~ the amount effective to induce a bone strengthening effect in a mammal is between 10 mg to 2500 mg of degraded collagen per day.

54. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 49, wherein the weight ratio of collagen to calcium is between 0.5-5.0: 1.

55. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 49, wherein the weight ratio of collagen to calcium is about 3.75: 1.

56. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 49, wherein the calcium agent suitable for absorption by a mammal is selected from the group consisting of calcium chloride, calcium carbonate, calcium lactate, ~~and~~ egg-shell derived calcium, and milk-derived calcium.

57. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 49, wherein the collagen is derived from porcine skin or bone.

58. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 57, wherein the collagen derived from porcine skin is a lyophilization product of pulverized and defatted skin corium layer.

59. (Currently Amended) The composition of claim 57, wherein the ~~wherein the~~ collagen derived from porcine bone is a lyophilization product of pulverized and decalcified bone.

60. (Previously Presented) The composition of claim 49, wherein the degraded collagen has a molecular weight of about 2-150kDa.